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BRAHMO THEISM IN INDIA,

BY

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BR. 10 THEISM IN INDIA.

MANY among my countrymen have begun to entertain the opinion that Brahmoism is destined to become the future religion of India ; some even hope that it will become the religion of the world. It often happens, however, that the expectations formed by a new sect are the result of excessive enthusiasm. My object, in the present discourse, is to ascertain the nature of the Brahmo religion, and, by an examination of its doctrines and precepts, to determine how far these expectations are well-grounded.

For the purposes of this inquiry, it is necessary to know to which class of religions, Brahmoism belongs. The word religion has been used in various senses. It has been applied to various systems of faith, worship, and morality. The different religions, which prevail in the world, comprise so many doctrines that it is scarcely possible to give a precise definition of religion. There are theological doctrines as well as those which are

atheistical. Of the former, the idea of God is the absolute basis ; while the latter do not acknowledge the existence of God, or, though not positively denying it, render the idea of it practically useless. Buddhism and the positive religion of Comte are examples of the latter class.

Theological systems, again, are divided and sub-divided into numerous Sections. We have revealed Theologies and Natural Theologies. The former are made to rest upon injunctions given by God direct, or through the medium of inspired agents ; while the latter derive the notion of the Deity, the belief in his existence, and their principles of morality from natural aptitudes or faculties of the human mind. Revealed religions are sub-divided again into monotheistic and polytheistic systems, and Natural Theologies into rational and intuitionist. The last-named systems require a further sub-division, for some are partially allied to, and others totally divorced from, reason:

Now, to which of these various classes does Brahmoism belong? In order to determine this, it is necessary to know, 1st, its

tenets, and 2ndly, its moral maxims. Unfortunately, however, there is no clear exposition in any book of *recognised authority* among the Brahmos, of these essential parts of their religious creed, with the exception of the little pamphlet called the “Brahma Dhurma”, in which its cardinal points of faith, and a few precepts of morality, apparently extracts from Sanskrit works, have been embodied.

For the present I will confine myself to the tenets, leaving the moral maxims for subsequent consideration.

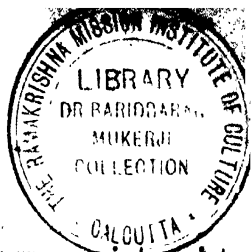
The tenets, contained therein, may be thus stated in substance :—

“There is but one God—Eternal, Almighty, Omniscient, and Omnipresent. He is perfect, and without a second, the source of all good and knowledge, and the Creator of the Universe. He is the *One* incomparable. His worship is the only means of securing temporal and eternal welfare, and to love Him, and to do that which He loves, is His worship.”

It would appear, then, that Brahmoism is a theological system. But under what

head of theological systems is it to be placed? There are revealed systems of theology, and systems independent of revelation, which last for the sake of brevity, I will call metaphysical.

In the pamphlet mentioned above, we find it stated that there is no standard Book of Truth — no sacred Scripture, among the Brahmos. It follows, therefore, that the Brahmo religion is not founded upon revelation and that whatever it teaches about God, and the moral duties of man, do not depend upon the word of God, but have to be deduced from reason, or derived from intuition; in other words, it is a metaphysical Theism. As such Brahmoism claims an affinity to the various systems of Natural Theology of modern Europe, Revelation had always been regarded as the vital principle of theological belief before the eighteenth century of the Christian era. The Hindus, the Christians, the Mahomedans all believe in revelation; and even the Greek and the Roman polytheists looked to their oracles for the expression of divine pleasure. Since that time, how-



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ever, a new philosophy has sprung into existence, which discarding revelation has made the human mind the interpreter of divine and moral mysteries.

Natural theology first invoked the assistance of reason, but afterwards rejected it, as unfit for the purpose, and substituted in its place a more mysterious power called Intuition. But this, too, has since been found incompetent to discharge alone the high functions of revelation, and an alliance has, at last, been proposed between reason and Intuition.*

It is not clear what the Brahmos think on this subject, *i. e.*, whether they appeal to reason alone, or to intuition, or to both conjointly. I will, however, consider each of them separately. First, as to Reason. Is this faculty of the mind competent to lead us to the knowledge of God? The advocates of natural theology maintain that it can. The great argument upon which this opinion is founded is that the human mind perceives marks of design in all the works

* This is substantially the theory of McComb.

and operations of Nature, and thence rises to the conception of a Supreme Designer.

This argument seems to me to be based upon an assumption, and it takes for granted the very thing which has to be proved. Keeping aside intuition for the present, what the mind perceives are only the phenomenal operations of Nature, and the law and order according to which they take place. But what necessary connection is there between the perception of the sequence of causes and effects, their *modus operandi*, and a design? Effects follow their causes and obey certain laws—this is all that the mind perceives; not that the causes, the effects, and the laws are themselves the effects of a design. The design has to be proved, but instead of proving it, the assertors of Natural Theology assume it, and upon this assumption build their theory of a Divine Maker, and by another assumption this Divine Maker is supposed to be the Governor of the World. This is illogical, for the utmost that we can assert on the authority of reason is that the total sum of the phenomena of nature has a first cause. But

what is the nature of this first cause? Is it a chemical, statical, or dynamical cause? Is it matter or life, is it a brute force, or is it a rational and sentient being? And if, a rational and sentient being, what are his attributes, sentiments and feelings? Can reason instruct us authoritatively on these points?

The advocates of Natural Theology say that this first cause is an intelligent and spiritual Being. The process of reasoning by which this inference is drawn is that effect must have similar adequate causes; and as man is an intelligent and spiritual Being, the cause, the Author of man, must likewise be intelligent and spiritual. But why should this first cause be purely and exclusively spiritual? The material world, and the material parts of man's organization are as much the results of that primary cause, as the phenomena of mind and spirit. It would equally follow, from the same process of reasoning, that this first cause is as much likely to be material as spiritual, or it may partake of the mixed character of both. We have not yet seen

any instance of a purely spiritual cause, producing a material effect, or *vice versa*.

But suppose that this first cause is a spiritual Being. Can we with the aid of reason attain to the knowledge of his attributes, his feelings, and sentiments? We must have positive information on these points, or else the worship of this Being is impossible. But human reason is circumscribed and limited ; it sees and judges through the medium of ideas, which, intuition apart, are supplied by the senses, and as the senses are influenced by external circumstances, its judgments are liable to error and partiality. Reason can, at best, feebly suggest the probable nature of divine attributes.

The moral and the emotional characteristics of man are supposed to be the characteristics also of the Deity. But can there be any analogy between the qualities of finite creatures and the attributes of the Creator, who is supposed to be infinite? Is it possible, is it rational, to form an estimate of divine justice and mercy, for example, from a consideration of those vir-

tues in imperfect mortals? There may be other Worlds, and other Beings in the scale of creation, and our actions may have to be judged with reference to all these, as well as to that part of the universe, which is visible to the human eye, or comprehensible to the human understanding. The notions of right and wrong, justice and mercy, sin and salvation, which we may have formed with our circumscribed knowledge, may be radically different from the notions entertained by an omniscient Judge. The attributes, therefore, with which we invest the First Cause, can be but merely the abstract generalisations of human qualities in their supposed perfection. .

Then, again, if we have to proceed by analogy, why eliminate the evil elements that are to be found in the nature of man—why extract the virtues only, and leave out of account the vicious propensities ?

If God have goodness, because man has it, and that goodness be infinite, because God is infinite, His wrath must likewise be infinite. If his love be unbounded, his hatred must also be unbounded. In short, if we go on

manufacturing attributes for the Deity from the materials which human nature supplies, we should be driven to imagine a being perfect in all the virtues and vices of man.

But suppose, we admit that the attributes of God can be inferred with tolerable approximation to truth, will that knowledge alone satisfy the spiritual cravings of mankind? Does not the human heart desire to know something more than this? Is it enough to say, that God is, has been, and will be, that he gives life and takes it away, that he hates sin, punishes the wicked, and loves the righteous? The human understanding is too inquisitive not to ask, how, whence and where is He? How and why was the creation of the Universe? Whence came evil into the World, and Who was the Author of sin and death? What is life, and what is eternity? Is the soul perishable like the frail tenement in which it dwells, if not, whither will it depart after its separation from the body? Where and in what condition will it be received after death? What will be the punishments of the wicked, and what and where will be the rewards of the virtuous soul?

These and a thousand other similar questions have to be answered, and the apparent contradictions in the moral economy of Providence have to be reconciled. But who can do this, except the Author of all these? Can human reason venture upon these speculations without the danger of being lost in an inextricable maze of Metaphysics? Can metaphysical discussions upon these points end in anything, but a circle of doubts and debate? This is the reason why Natural Theology is always tottering,—now leaning upon the right-arm of Reason, and now of Intuition. It must be so. Faith must be continually driven from point to point without the sheet-anchor of revelation.

There is only one way of obviating the objections suggested above, and that is by the hypothesis that a naked belief in the existence of God is enough to satisfy human faith. To those who entertain this opinion, I can only answer in the words of Comte, who has truly described with his characteristic force the slippery grounds upon which such a faith stands. “When this philosophy” says he “extended from the inorganic

world to man, implanting its entities in his moral and social nature, monotheistic faith began to be irretrievably perverted by admitting the alliance of reason. No longer resting on a natural, universal obedience to a direct and permanent revelation, the faith subjected itself to the protection of demonstrations, which must necessarily admit of permanent controversy, and even of refutation, such as those, which, in strange incoherence, were already named Natural Theology. This historical title is a good exponent of the temporary fusion of reason and faith, which could end in nothing, but the absorption of faith by reason : it represents the contradictory dualism of the old notion of God and the new entity of Nature, which were the respective centres of the theological and metaphysical philosophies. The antagonism of the two conceptions was reconciled for the moment by the intervention of the positive instinct, which offered the hypothesis of a God, creating invariable laws, which He bound himself never to alter, and confided to Nature for special, and continuous application ;—a fiction which is in close

analogy with that of politicians about constitutional royalty. This supposition bears a characteristic metaphysical impress ; and it made Nature the main object of contemplation and interest, reserving only a *barren veneration for the majestic inertia* of the supreme divinity, and, therefore, placing him at a remote distance from thought, which would naturally seek him less and less. Popular good sense never accepted the doctrine, which neutralised all theological ideas of arbitrary will and permanent action ; and it is, therefore, no wonder that popular instinct urged the charge of atheism against so many learned assertors of Natural Theology.*

But, if reason alone be unable to discharge the high functions of revelation, cannot intuition, or intuition combined with reason, undertake the task ? This is the question which has to be next considered.

I will not plunge myself into any abstruse discussions about the nature and origin of our ideas, nor attempt to decide whether what are called first principles are not, in reality, the results of experience and observation.

* Positive Philosophy, translated by Harriet Martineau V. II. p.p. 421 & 422.

This subject has given rise to perpetual controversy among philosophers, in which many have lost themselves, as McCosh says, in a thicket of confusion. But taking for granted that there are native ideas in the mind, and accepting their definition, I will only test whether the notion of God, and the belief in his existence are intuitive truths; and even if they be, whether revelation is not still indispensable for the foundation of a theological system of faith.

Intuitions have been defined to be "native, necessary, and universal."* Some say they are absolute entities, and perceived by a distinct faculty or cognition; others hold that they require development, and are very "closely related to the faculties" of the mind.†

Let us consider first the theory of an independant Intuition. According to its assertors, there is a separate faculty or cognition, peculiarly adapted for the perception of particular truths. It is independant of reason, memory and reflection. It enables

* See McCosh. *Intuitions of the Mind*. Introduction p. 4. revised edition.

† *Ibid* p. 18.

all persons, educated or uneducated, to perceive certain classes of truths with equal perspecuity and infallibility, and the truths thus perceived are called self-evident or axiomatic.

Of this class of ideas, it is said, are our notion of God and belief in his existence. And as intuitive truths are self-evident, these require neither the confirmation of reason nor revelation.

Now, intuitive truths, according to definition, are "native, necessary, and universal." If, therefore, our knowledge and belief of God be intuitive, all men in all ages and countries ought to have this knowledge and belief. How comes it then, that there are whole tribes and communities of men who have not only no conception of the Deity, but none whatever of any divinity. The following is a fact vouched for by a Christian Missionary. An American Indian of the Abbipone tribe, the most intelligent of his race, being asked as to who, he supposed, was the Creator of the starry heavens then shining above his head, and what the opinions of his ancestors were, made the following reply :—

“My father, my grand-father, and great-grand-father were wont to contemplate the Earth alone, solicitous only to see whether the plain afforded grass and water to their horses. They never troubled themselves about what went on in the heavens, and who was the Creator of the stars.”* The language of this tribe of savages, says the writer of the above passage, does not contain a single word which expresses God, or a divinity. Perhaps, such instances are rare, but a single exception of this kind is sufficient to disprove the theory of an intuitive belief in God.

If, again, the notion of God be a native intuition of the mind, how have people in ancient and modern times conceived a vengeful, a lustful, or a cruel God? The conception of God must, I presume, include the conception of his attributes, and the notion, if formed at all, must have reference to the same object, and indicate the same properties. If, therefore, the notion of God were spontaneous, innate and intuitive, could

* Max Muller's History of Sanskrit Literature, second edition, p. 539.

there ever have been such monstrous imaginings about the Deity ? The only answer to this can be that such notions of God are false and fanciful ; in other words, people who entertain such ideas have no notion of God at all. It may be so ; but what becomes of the theory that our conception of the Deity is intuitive, and that intuition is a separate and independent faculty of the mind ? Even McCosh, who is a zealous advocate of the theory of innate ideas, has condemned the hypothesis of a special cognition. " If there is any validity," he says,* " in the conditions laid down in this treatise, as to the logic of intuition, those who advocate this view may be called on to shew that such an intuition exists ; that it is original—that is, incapable of being resolved into anything else ; and fundamental—that is, leaning on nothing else. It may be further demanded that they explain the precise law, that is, rule of the intuition's operation. Is it of the nature of an intellectual cognition, or is it a mere feeling, or is it a faith ? What, in particular,

* *Intuitions of the mind*, revised edition, p. 378.

is the precise object which it perceives and which it reveals, and how much is revealed regarding that object? Is God revealed as a being, or a person, or a substance? Is it revealed as a power, or a cause? or is he revealed simply as a life? Is he revealed as a living God, or as an infinite God? or as a holy, that is, sin-hating God? It behoves those who invoke a separate intuition to reply to such questions as these in a way that is, at least, approximately correct; and in giving the answers, it will be needful to reconcile the replies with the known facts of history, and, in particular with the degraded views which have been entertained of the divine being. If it be a partial or mutilated God that is revealed—say, a bare abstraction without qualities, or a brute force, or a vague life or activity,—we are left, after all, to depend on other processes when we would clothe him with perfections. If, on the other hand, it be a full orb'd light, shining in all the glory of wisdom and excellence and infinity that is hung out in the firmament before the mental eye, the question will have to be answered, “How

have the great body of mankind come to see him in such distorted shapes, and in such dark and hideous colors ? ”

It will follow from the preceding observations that the notion of God and the belief in his existence are not within the special cognizance of any peculiar intuitive principle, or faculty of the mind ; and, indeed, that such a principle or faculty, is a pure mythical invention.

There are others, however, who maintain, that, though not entirely, our ideas about God are partially intuitive. We have, therefore, to consider next how far these ideas are intuitive according to this aspect of the theory. The views of this class of thinkers have been explained by McCosh at some length. He says “the idea of God, the belief in God, may be justly represented as native to man. He does not require to go in search of it : it comes to him. He has only to be waiting for it and disposed to receive it, and it will be pressed on him from every quarter ; it springs up naturally as the plant or animal does from its germ ; it will well up spontaneously from the depths

of the heart ; or it will shine upon him from the works of Nature, as light does from the sun."* But in the process by which man arrives at the knowledge of Divine existence, there is, according to him, a variety of elements conspiring. "In particular there are both experimental and *a priori* elements."†

I.—"There are facts involved. These become known to him in the ordinary exercise of his faculties of knowledge."

II.—"The principle of causation is involved. The object being offered the intuition is ready to act. The object presented is an effect, and the intuition demands a cause."

III.—"Other intuitions take hold of other facts and confirm the argument, and clothe the Divine Being with a variety of perfections." These are the propositions he lays down and supports by various arguments drawn from the marks of design in the works of Nature, the existence of intelligence and conscience in man, and his consciousness that he is a thinking, loving, and willing

* Intuitions of the mind p. 377.

† See p. p. 379-389.

being. In short, he adduces all the arguments which I have noticed above when discussing the subject of Natural Theology with reference to reason. No one, who reads through the chapter in which these views have been explained by him, can help coming to the conclusion that, after all, the knowledge of God and his divine attributes are, according to this school of metaphysicians, made to depend upon deductions drawn by the reasoning faculties. How yet "the idea of God, and the belief in God" are represented to be intuitive ideas, axiomatic truths, "welling up spontaneously from the depths of the heart" is what, with my best efforts, I have failed to understand. If experience has to supply materials, if observation of external phenomena, and the phenomena of our internal nature, is necessary to arrive at the deductions of a divine cause and his moral perfections, why call this knowledge intuitive any more than the knowledge of other truths, which are also matters of deductive reasoning? The inference may have to depend upon some materials which are supplied by the elementary cognitive principles,

such as the principle of causation and consciousness ; these elementary principles may even be allowed to be intuitive ; but the inference is not the less, on that account, a pure rational deduction. It is, more or less, the case in every instance of deductive reasoning, and, it would be as much logical, therefore, to call all our knowledge, native, spontaneous and self-evident. We do not require to go in search of other truths also, " but we are led to them " (to use the words of the author) " by the circumstances in which we are placed, calling into energy mental principles which are natural to all." We require no doubt, in some cases, to go in search for materials, but that is, because suitable materials are not so abundant, not because the truth, the knowledge, the inference is non-intuitive. Moreover, how is the theory consistent with the definition of intuitive truths—that is, that they are " native, necessary and universal." I have already alluded to the fact that the belief in God is not necessarily universal, and McCosh has himself placed in the strongest light the arguments which go to show that the theory of the

knowledge and belief of God being native and universal, is inconsistent with historical facts. If, however, the views of this class of intuitive philosophers be, in substance, what the advocates of Natural Theology wish to support upon rational grounds, and the difference is only a technical difference about the name, I have nothing further to add to what I have said before, and the arguments which the author of the Positive Philosophy has used in such powerful language.

But whatever be the nature of our notion of God, and belief in God, the question still remains whether we can dispense with revelation. In strange contradiction with his own arguments, we find McCosh himself maintaining the negative, with one insignificant qualification, that is, that "Natural Theology is *also* fitted to confirm and widen the conception (the conception of God) among the comparatively few who may be expected to study it." "This is what is done (*viz.*, God is known and brought into real existence, or as he expresses it, the idea of a moral and spiritual God is aroused and kept alive)—this is what is done in the best of all modes—

in the concrete mode, in the word of God—which ought, therefore,* to be thrown open to children at an early age. Only thus can we get light admitted into the dwelling of the poor and into the heart of the busy man of the world, and only thus have it handed down from age to age.” * We have also the authority of Comte, a philosopher of an entirely different school. “Absolute monotheism,” he observes † “as presented by metaphysical deists—that is the doctrine of one Supernatural Being, without mediators between him and man—is a mere abstraction, which can furnish no basis for any religious system of real efficacy intellectual, moral, and above all, social.”

To us it is evident—it is evident to common sense—that in order to be logical and consistent, in order to be of any real benefit, whether to the many or to the few, a religion which puts forward the Deity as the Creator and the moral Governor of the world, as the object of highest love and adoration, must rest upon the foundation

* *Intuitions of the mind* p. 388.

† *Positive Philosophy*, Vol. II.—251.

of revealed knowledge. We can have no rational love, or fear, no living faith in God, unless we were thoroughly convinced of his reality, unless we were assured, beyond the possibility of controversy, of what he actually thinks and feels. But who, except God; can give us this assurance. His divine word is the only reliable authority upon which we can be certain of what he is and thinks ; he alone can tell us what he likes and dislikes, can point out the path in which we should go, the acts which we should do, so as to be pleasing in his eyes. The worship of an incomprehensible abstraction, for which we have ourselves to manufacture attributes, is more monstrous than Atheism, and more superstitious than Idolatry. "The utmost efforts of philosophy can go no farther than feebly to point out the desire, the hope, or, at most, the probability of a future state ; there is nothing except a divine revelation that can ascertain the existence and describe the condition of the invisible country which is destined to receive the souls of men after their separation from the body." This remark of Gibbon, though made in a

spirit of sarcasm, is nevertheless perfectly true, if the doctrine of divine Government is at all to be upheld.

Another reason, why theology stands in need of revelation, is the necessity of a permanent basis. No theological doctrine can ever be matured into a system of religion without some scriptures, some revealed texts to keep it steady. Perpetual controversy and dissensions will divide the believers into innumerable sects; each individual will assert his independence of thought and freedom of conscience, until at last the doctrine is minced into a thousand pieces, and distorted into as many shapes as there are individual fancies. We find it illustrated—amply illustrated, in Brahmoism. This metaphysical theism has been in existence, not yet quite half a century, but within this brief space of time, its followers have already ranged themselves under different leaders; and as to the exact nature of the Brahmaic doctrine and worship, it is difficult to find two individuals whose views are in perfect accordance.

These considerations render it evident that for the existence of the theological

doctrine, for its development as a system of religion, revelation is indispensable. Indeed, there is but one of two alternatives to choose—either to believe in God and revelation, or to discard revelation and God together.

Having indicated in what respects Brahmoism appears to me to be fundamentally defective, I will, in the next place, consider how far it is likely to become the future religion of India. I propose to consider it with special reference to India, because at its origin it was very nearly related to Hindu Theism ; and because its chances of universal diffusion, so fondly wished for by its more sanguine followers, are, for the present, so little, that it is better to leave that question to be settled by time.

Will Brahmoism then become the future religion of India ? This question has to be viewed in two aspects :—*1stly*,—how far it is likely to propagate as a mere doctrine, and *2ndly*,—how far it will maintain its ground even if it does propagate.

In order to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion, it will be better to ascertain first, why other religions have not prevailed in India.

That it is not for the first time that Hinduism has to meet an enemy is obvious. Buddhism had at one time been zealously preached in India, and Mahomedanism dictated at the point of the sword. Jesuit, Roman Catholic, and Protestant Missionaries of Christianity have been preaching for some centuries past. Buddhism, like Brahmoism, was the offspring of the Hindu mind, and had, moreover, the support of the state. But whilst it holds a supremacy over the largest portion of mankind in other parts of the world, not a trace of it is now to be found in the land of its birth. For five centuries, at least, Mahomedan infidels swayed over India with an iron sceptre ; and yet did Hinduism set at defiance the Koran and the sword of Mahomet. In spite again of the efforts of the ministers of the Gospel, since the days of the Jesuits, and in spite of the fact that it is, at the present day, the religion of its rulers, Christianity has not prevailed in India. It is the more surprising, when we consider that Hinduism is not a religion possessed of youthful vigour, but a religion whose origin is lost in the remotest antiquity.

The explanation of this extraordinary vitality of the Hindu religion is to be found in two facts—its character, and the law which regulates the propagation of religions. Hinduism is commonly described as an impure polytheism, or a gross idolatry, and compared to the polytheisms of Greece and Rome, or the idolatry of savages. By some also it is held to be a mystical pantheism. This diversity of opinions arises from the points of view from which it is looked at—from considering it in its detached portions, and not as a systematic whole. Thus considered, however, Hinduism would appear in its real character—as a mixture of monotheism, polytheism, and idolatry. The monotheistic element predominates in the Vedas, the polytheistic in the Purans, and in the popular idolatrous worship of the present day both these elements are present. This composite character of the Hindu religion is the result of the circumstances in which the Aryans were placed in India. The law of the evolution of religious ideas, as finally settled by the author of Positive Philosophy, is that every mind,

whether the individual or the national, must pass through three stages—the fetichistic, the polytheistic, and the monotheistic. In the Vedic era the Aryans of India had passed the age of polytheism, and risen to the conception of the supreme divinity. But as there was a large proportion of non-Aryan population, whose minds had not passed through the preparatory stages for the reception of monotheism, they remained attached to the polytheistic and idolatrous doctrines. In course of time as the two races mixed with each other more freely, and the Aryans themselves deteriorated, the polytheistic divinities, whose presence can also be traced in the Vedas, began to re-assert their claims; and Pouranic Hinduism was the result. In this system all the elements have been co-ordinated; Indra, Yama, Varuna, and the rest of the pre-vedic deities have been preserved, but in subordination to the authority of the one Supreme Deity. Colebrooke, in his Essay on Hindu religion, has, here and there, thrown out hints to the effect that some of the old Gods and Goddesses still continued indepen-

dent. But it is not the true Pauranic theory—the theory of Pauranic Hinduism as an entire system. Indeed this is impossible, after the Supreme Deity has been once raised on the throne. Every nation believed in some divinity or other, before it believed in God ; but all the divinities worshipped before have always been degraded from their rank of independent chiefs to that of serfs or servants. Thus it is we meet with angels and superior intelligences—spiritual and immortal beings—in the Christian and the Mahomedan religions. They are, it seems to me, the deposed kings reduced to the rank of celestial attendants, singing hossanahs or bearing messages as the eternal slaves of the Eternal God. It was the same with the Hindus : the Gods were deposed but not degraded to serfs—not wholly deprived of their offices, the greater part of which they continued to discharge as before. 3692—

It would appear then that the Hindu religion is adapted for all classes of men—those who are fetichistic, those who are polytheistic, and those who are monotheistic in their ideas.

This being the character of Hinduism, we have now to consider the conditions necessary for the propagation of a religion.

History bears ample testimony to the fact, that no system of faith can prevail against the established creed of a country unless there be something new in it—some essential doctrine with which men, to whom it is preached, are not familiar, or with which they are only imperfectly acquainted. We need but trace the course of any religion to be convinced of the truth of this remark. By way of illustration I will here briefly refer to the character of ancient polytheisms, and the progress of Christianity and Islam.

It is proverbial that all the polytheisms of the world, Greek, Roman, Hindu or Peruvian, have been extremely apathetic and tolerant. Under the sway of the Roman Emperors a hundred different forms of polytheistic worship flourished side by side, and yet few instances are recorded of any one of those numerous classes of polytheists having ever sought or secured proselytes from among the rest. The Hindu polytheists likewise have never been known to have attempted

the conversion of any other nation to their own religion. It could not be otherwise; for, when men were inspired with similar ideas about God and his manifestations, and followed systems of worship substantially the same, there was but little room left for the conversion of one set of polytheists to the rites and ceremonies of another. They did, no doubt, in many instances, imitate one another, and adopt their mutual divinities and ceremonies, but could never altogether give up their traditional creed. Hence at those periods of world's history, when the belief in many gods was the prevalent religious doctrine, there seems to have existed a tacit understanding among the various nations of the earth, that each should respect the opinions and practices of its neighbours. It is remarkable, however, that whenever the Jewish nations settled in other countries, there were many instances of conversion to the Mosaic Law.*

The rapid progress of Christianity in Europe is equally illustrative. When it arose with its idea of one God, its doctrines

* Sale's Koran (preface.)

of future life, universal charity and love, it at once touched a new chord in the hearts of men who, previous to its rise, were only accustomed to think of a multiplicity of gods and goddesses. Men flocked in crowds to embrace the doctrines of this new religion which supplied a simpler conception of the Deity, and higher motives of action. No sooner, however, a rival system of monotheism appeared in the field, and Islam was established in Arabia, Syria, Persia, and other countries of Asia and Africa, the rapidity with which Christianity was progressing considerably diminished. There is every reason to believe that except for the rise of Islam, the Bible would have been the Book of Truth in all those regions of the earth which now obey the authority of the Koran. It is owing to the same cause that, in more recent times, the efforts of Christian missionaries have been so little successful among nations who are not entirely ignorant of the doctrines of the unity of God, of the immortality of the soul, and of a future life of reward and punishment. In India and the Chinese Territories, the progress of Chris-

tianity has been so slow as to be almost imperceptible.

The history of Mahomedanism, likewise, affords another illustration. It is a significant fact that so long as it was proclaimed in Arabia, Egypt and the Moorish lands, the celerity of its march was perfectly astonishing, but the moment it reached Spain on the one hand, and India on the other, it met with obstacles which at once checked its diffusion. Christianity and Hinduism became the two extreme limits within which it has ever since remained confined.

Having ascertained these two points, we return to the subject of the future progress of Brahmoism in India.

Brahmoism teaches the unity, the perfection, the wisdom, the goodness of God, and the necessity and efficacy of prayer to man. But are not the Hindus familiar with these ideas? Let us hear what Max Muller says.† "The key-note of all religion, natural as well as revealed, is present in the hymns of the Veda, and never completely drowned by

* History of Ancient Sanscrit Liter. p. 538.

the strange music which generally deafens our ears, when we first listen to the wild echoes of heathen worship. There is the belief in God, the perception of the difference between good and evil, the conviction that God hates sin and loves the righteous. We can hardly speak with sufficient reverence of the discovery of these truths, however trite they may appear to ourselves, and if the name of revelation seems too sacred a name to be applied to them, that of discovery is too profane; for, it would throw the vital truths of all religion, ancient and modern, into the same category as the discoveries of a Galilio or a Newton."

It will be said that the Vedic Hinduism ought not to be taken as the type of the popular Hinduism of the present day. No doubt, it is not to be taken as the type; but if, what has been said above regarding the composite character of the Hindu religion, be correct, the objection loses much of its force. Indeed the Vedas—the sacred scriptures of the Hindus—stand in the same relation to the various sections of Pouranic Hinduism, as the gospel of Jesus does to the Protestant,

the Catholic, the Calvinistic, and the other Christian Churches. It is an undeniable fact that the Purans are based upon the aphorisms and the dissertations of the inspired psalmists, and they are appealed to by every sectarian who professes to be a Hindu. Now, it is characteristic of all simpler truths, that however much they may remain mixed with coarser and less refined ideas, they will nevertheless exert their influence, to a great extent, in moulding and modifying the grösser thoughts. The monotheistic idea of God, when once conceived, can never be completely lost amidst the jarring elements of polytheism and idolatry. Max Muller has beautifully expressed this idea in the following passage:—"But there is a monotheism that pervades the polytheism of the Vedas, and even in the invocations of their innumerable gods, the remembrance of a God, one and infinite, breaks through the mist of an idolatrous phraseology, like the blue sky that is hidden by the passing clouds." I am also supported in this view by the following eloquent passage from the pen of a native gentleman:—"If by idolatry," says the

writer, "is meant a system of worship which confines our ideas of the deity to a mere image of clay or stone, which prevents our hearts from being elevated with the lofty notions of the attributes of God, if this is what is meant by idolatry, we disclaim idolatry, we abhor idolatry, and deplore the ignorance or uncharitableness of those that charge us with this grovelling system of worship. But if firmly believing, as we do, in the omnipresence of God, we behold by the light of our imagination in the form of an image any of his glorious manifestations, ought we to be charged with identifying them with the matter of the image, whilst during those moments of sincere and fervent devotion we do not even think of matter. If, at the sight of the portrait of a beloved and venerated friend no longer existing in the world, our heart is filled with sentiments of love and reverence, if we fancy him present in the picture still looking upon us with his wonted tenderness and affection, and then indulge our feelings of love and gratitude, should we be charged with offering the grossest insult to him—that of fancying him

to be no other than a piece of painted paper.”*

I am afraid, therefore, that Brahmoism, as a doctrine, contains very little which is new to the Hindu religion. This becomes still more obvious when we compare its doctrines to what the Vedantists profess. Their essential tenets may be concisely stated thus :—There is one God and one God alone, by whom and in whom the universe exists, and the attainment of this knowledge and a perfect appreciation of its truth, as the means of final beatitude, is the highest object of man. But man cannot attain this knowledge, cannot appreciate its truth, without first purifying his heart by holiness, prayer, and meditation.

I do not think that in any system of monotheistic faith the unity of the Godhead has been affirmed with so much force as by this sect of Hindu philosophers. The essence of Vedantism (if I am rightly informed) is “ব্রহ্ম সত্য, জগৎ মিথ্যা, জীব ব্রহ্ম”—God is true, everything else is false, and man is God. According to the spirit of this philosophy a man must not only

* Quoted in the preface to the “Chips from a German Workshop.”

believe in God but forget the things around him, nay, forget himself in God ; he must not only think that nothing but God exists, but should feel it with the force of consciousness ; and when a man's conviction has acquired this degree of strength, then, and then alone, is his faith perfect—a perfection of faith indispensable to the emancipation of his soul.

As for the efficacy of prayer, the very first passages of the Vedantshar shew what an essential ingredient it is in the formation of this theological philosophy. In the opinion of the Vedantists, the attainment of the knowledge of God by the study of the Upanishads is the salvation of man ; that man alone is worthy of this study whose heart has been purified by the subjugation of the senses, by the abnegation of all desires, and by constant meditation and prayer. Acts of piety, according to them, purify the heart, prayer and meditation accustom the mind to habits of concentration, and this concentration of the mind is absolutely necessary to the attainment of the true knowledge of God.

It would thus appear that the doctrines of the unity of God and efficacy of prayer, are not for the first time announced in India by the teachers of Brahmoism ; on the contrary, whoever reads the "Vedántshár" and the "Brahmo Dhurma" together, cannot help coming to the conclusion that the main idea of Brahmo Theism has been derived from this school of Hindu philosophy. In fact, the texts and passages of the Upanishads, extracted or translated by Rajah Rammohun, were the germs from which Brahmoism sprang ; and very little has since been done except the denial of revelation and the condemnation of ascetism. No doubt the rigour of asceticism and the intenseness of divine meditation were carried to extreme points in the Vedant philosophy. But it seems to me that if the worship of a metaphysical God be at all possible, it is only possible in the way in which the Vedantists did it. Without revelation, and without a meditator, there can be no living, no real faith,—not merely a theoretical belief—in the supreme spiritual Essence, except by intense abstraction, and complete absorption of the mind in the object of its contemplation.

I do not mean that Brahmoism is the same as the Vedant philosophy. The later Brahmoes have rejected much that is to be found in it, and added many metaphysical notions, as, for instance, the theory of intuition, from Parker and other modern writers of the western world. But after all, it is a metaphysical theology of the same species as the Vedant philosophy, and the question still remains whether it will become the future religion of India. We find that Vedantism has not succeeded; we find also that, in other countries Deism has failed, and it is all but certain that Brahmoism will also fail in becoming a popular religion. The Hindus seem to express the common sense of mankind when they argue against the possibility of a metaphysical doctrine becoming a popular religion. They say that distracted with the cares of the world, the minds of men, who are engaged in its affairs, are incapable of that degree of abstraction and thought which are necessary for the full realization of the conception of an abstract Supreme Divinity. What is wanted in the religion of a man, they argue, is not an idea, but an animating faith in the object of wor-

ship, and such a faith in the Deity in a state of sublime refinement, can hardly exist in an ordinary mind harassed with the thousand cares of life.

This common-sense view of the question has the sanction of philosophers who belong to opposite schools of thought. Auguste Comte, in a passage partially quoted* before, has thus expressed himself :—

“The popular idea of monotheism closely resembles the latest polytheistic conception of a multitude of supernatural beings subjected directly, regularly, and permanently to the sway of a single will, by which their respective offices are appointed : and the popular instinct justly rejects as barren the notion of a God destitute of ministers.”† McCosh corroborates this view by saying, that Natural Theology is fitted only for the comparatively few who may be expected to study it, and that “it is only by a written revelation that the truth can be made patent to the great mass of mankind, or saved from perversion by the fancies, the

* See p. 24 ante.

† See Philosophy Vol. II, p. 252

foolish speculations, and the infidelity of the educated." "I am convinced," says he, "that the great mass of the people would speedily lapse into some degraded worship, probably of the *Mormon* type; and that the philosophers, pursuing their own favourite ideas, would exercise little influence, certainly little influence for good, and care little to put forth what little they have over an unthinking multitude, who would appreciate their distant and refined speculations only by evincing at times their shrewd sense of their practical absurdity."*

These observations seem to be founded upon an accurate study of human nature. So inveterate is the tendency of the popular mind to confound the abstract with the concrete that it has always been found difficult to preserve the notion of God in a state of purity. The Jews repeatedly relapsed into idolatry even when they were living under the direct superintendence of the Deity, when he gave them laws on the Sacred Mount, or accompanied them in their exiles

* *Intuitions of the Mind*, Part III, p. 389.

as a pillar of fire or a column of smoke. The Christians, too, not long after Jesus had left them to join his heavenly father, began to indulge in all sorts of superstitious practices from which the Roman Catholics have not yet been completely emancipated. Nor can it be doubted that were to analyze the actual state of popular belief amongst the Protestant and Mahomedan communities, we would find their faith in Christ and Mahomet, in the church and in the mosque, to be more real and substantial than in the abstract intangible notion of God. With great truth the learned Author of the "Chips from a German Workshop," has remarked, that "if there is one thing which a comparative study of religious places in the clearest light it is the inevitable decay to which every religion is exposed." *

It is evident from what has preceded that Brahmoism will either remain confined to the *comparatively few*, or lapse into some degraded worship, if it seeks to mix with the multitude. Already has Brahmoism shewn symptoms of a downward course. As origin-

ally conceived, it was to be a religion which had nothing to do with external pomp, which was to have no ceremony or rites, but simple meditation and devotion, the acquisition of knowledge and the exercise of benevolence, were to form its distinguishing features. In short, it was to be the religion of the *comparatively few*. Of late, however, this lofty ideal appears to have been given up. A desire seems to have taken possession of the hearts of its followers to make it popular, and as a necessary consequence, they have been obliged to have recourse to such show and ceremony as have an attraction for the multitude, as are calculated to work upon their senses and imagination. Processions preceded by banners, and attended by bands of popular music, are now to be seen parading in the streets, whilst bare-footed Brahmoes, robed in sacred silk, are singing psalms or chaunting hymns. True to the popular instinct, again, there is, on the other hand, a decided tendency to do divine homage to the great Apostle of Brahmoism. These may, no doubt, furnish subjects for criticism to those who may be disposed to

look with an envious eye upon the superior pretensions of the Brahmaes. A Hindu, for instance, or a Papist, may no doubt retort by saying, that if processions like these are calculated to produce devotional fervour, why not offer flower and perfume at a holy shrine, or light candles at sacred festivals; and why not worship the memory of a holy saint or a departed hero. To us, however, all this seems perfectly natural. Divine worship must, in course of time, cling to an idol or altar for support. A saviour, a mediator, a prophet, or an image must become the final substitute for God in the popular mind. It is not the fault of this class, or that class of men, but it is the natural defect of human nature—the inability of ordinary mortals to realize the conception of an unknown reality. A form, a ceremony, an image is necessary for the support of a real faith in an invisible God. The popular instinct is never satisfied until it has a conceivable object of devotion to contemplate and adore. Men are too apt, again, to fall into a state of cold apathy when the objects of their love and veneration are removed to an inconceivable dis-

tance of time or space ;—but too often do they forget their beloved friends and revered benefactors in the whirl of a busy life. A token, a remembrance, a something to revive their recollections is indispensable to arouse the dormant feelings of love and gratitude. And as a ring, or a feather, a mound or a marble, is the emblem of profane attachment, so a church, a temple, an image or an altar is the sacred emblem of divine adoration. The human mind is likewise extremely prone to a species of devotion called hero-worship. We find its prevalence universally in all conditions of society, ancient or modern. All men indulge their feeling of admiration more or less fervently, and the more devout raise their heroes and saints to the rank of gods. Religious heroes have, in all ages and countries, been honored with divine homage whether represented in material images or not. And what Dryden said in his Ode, is not only true of Philip's warlike son, but of every son of Eve who has raised himself high above " the listening crowd :"

" The listening crowd admire the lofty sound,
 A present deity they shout around,
 A present deity the vaulted roofs rebound.
 With ravished ears,
 The monarch hears,
 Assumes the God,
 Affects to nod,
 And seems to shake the spheres."

We do not blame the Brahmos, but simply call their attention to these facts to shew how impracticable it is to found a popular religion on the basis of a metaphysical theology.

The foregoing considerations will have made it clear, I hope, that Brahmoism, like the Vedant philosophy, must either retire into the hearts of the select few, or become degraded into some gross superstition in the hearts of the uneducated million. The common mistake of religious Reformers seems to be that they are apt to ignore the law, which regulates the development of religious ideas—the inter-dependence of the intellectual condition of the believer and his religious and moral purity. The history of Christianity during the middle ages of Europe, of Hinduism in its various stages

of progress and decline, of Buddhism at its rise and decay, proves unmistakeably that whatever the excellence of the doctrines, however sacred the source from which they proceed, their adoption is impossible, and their corruption inevitable, unless the minds into which they are instilled have received a suitable cultivation ; in other words, the more cultivated are the intellectual faculties of the mind the more refined will be its moral and religious ideas.

The question is thus reduced to one of intellectual culture. To make the Brahmo faith the future national creed of India, and to preserve it in its state of theoretical purity, it is necessary to raise the whole nation to the intellectual pitch to which the Brahmos themselves have attained. But is it possible ? The whole past history of the human race proves, I fear, the supposition of such a possibility to be merely an utopian dream. But admitting the bare possibility, does it not follow that the regeneration of the Hindus, religious, moral, and social, depends upon their intellectual regeneration rather than upon the mere enunciation of

doctrines? In truth it is education—good scientific education, the dissemination of the truths of History, Geography, Geology, Chemistry, Astronomy, and the other branches of Physical Science, that can alone accomplish the task, if the complete separation of superstition from theological beliefs be at all possible. Hundreds of texts and sermons will not convince a Hindu of the absurdity of his notion that the earth rests upon the back of a tortoise, or that the solar and the lunar eclipses are caused by a monster; but teach him Geography and Astronomy—teach him the laws which bind direct and control the phenomena of Nature, all his errors, all his superstitions and prejudices will vanish and melt away as if by enchantment. True it is, that a religion often thrives, often spreads by preaching; but the doctrines of the Brahmo religion are unfit to propagate by preaching. Christianity can be preached, Mahomedanism can be preached, the truths of the Gospel and the texts of the Koran can be made the subjects of eloquent dissertations; men may be invited, exhorted, nay commanded to hear and obey

them. But the abstruse doctrines of Brahmo theology cannot be preached ; it can only be taught in the rooms of an academy, and taught only to a few individuals. For essentially what the Brahmos have to accomplish is to destroy superstition—at least what they consider superstition—superstition of all sorts, Hindu, Christian and Mahomedan. But is not the diffusion of true knowledge historical and scientific, the surest, the safest and the easiest way of doing this ? It is to be regretted that so much energy is being wasted in misdirected efforts. The work of reformation would have been more effectual, the influence for good more abiding, if instead of preaching their own convictions, the Brahmos had devoted themselves to teach their countrymen the means of arriving at those convictions ;—if, in short, they had been as zealous and ardent in promoting real and substantial education as they are in pursuing the phantom of an imaginary Church.

I have, hitherto, said nothing about the moral precepts of Brahmoism, first, because they cannot be easily ascertained, and second,

ly, because there is nothing remarkable in them.

This, the only useful part of a religion, from a practical point of view, has been left by the Brahmos in a state of uncertainty. They have digested no moral code and have not explained the authority upon which their maxims are based. They virtually acknowledge that they have nothing of their own. The principle upon which they act is to select their maxims of morality wherever they may be found, and, accordingly, in their detached precepts they have drawn largely upon the scriptures of other religions—the Christian Gospel mainly, and partly the Hindu revelations. The antiquity or the universality of these moral maxims will, doubtless, not prevent their reiteration ; but what we fail to see is the *rationale* of their procedure. They say* that they will select their maxims from every book—sacred or profane ; but who, or what is to be the judge or the standard of such selections, and what is to be the sanction of the precepts so selected ? It is all very well to say that

* See Brahmo Durmo.

a man should not steal, murder, or commit adultery, but what is to be the penalty of these moral delinquencies, and in what way is that penalty to be enforced? Brahmoism is altogether silent upon these essential points of religious legislation. It talks of a future world and the immortality of the soul, but it shrinks from describing the nature of that future, and the condition of the soul after it shall have departed from its terrestrial abode. It could not well be otherwise, for the fundamental defect of Brahmoism—its want of a revelation—is an insuperable obstacle in the way of its venturing upon these speculations. It is merely the hope, the desire, at most, the probability, as Gibbon truly says, which in common with all speculative philosophers, the Brahmos have to suggest for the consolation and encouragement of the virtuous among their fraternity. The moral precepts, which Brahmoism inculcates, are, in short, what Jesus, Mohamet, the old Hindu psalmists, or Pagan philosophers of ancient and modern times, have prescribed or forbidden. In fact, they are all old truths without a particle of new

thought to give them a new life. I will, therefore, pass them by without any further comment.

There is one other matter in connection with the present subject which I cannot leave untouched—the position of the so-called Educated Natives. This class of men have been made the subject of merciless denunciation at the hands of Brahmo preachers ; hardly an opportunity is missed by their representative man without some severe strictures against them. They are the burden of every song or sermon, which falls from the Brahmo pulpit. The Educated Natives have been all denounced as hypocrites and called by all sorts of names which can be found in the vocabulary of abusive epithets. It is necessary, therefore, to know who these Educated Natives are, and what is the head and front of their offence.

In the ordinary acceptation of the phrase, educated natives would mean all who have received a liberal English education. But it would seem from the language used in their pulpit oratory that the Brahmos understand it in a different sense. For the

sake of clearness I will divide the Educated Natives into two classes—those who are Brahmos, and those who are not. The first, in matters of faith and worship, have renounced the opinions of the orthodox Hindus, and refuse to conform to their religious ceremonies and many of their social customs, while the latter, though equally sceptical in their religious ideas, continue apparently attached to the Hindu community, and bow upon many points of social economy to the prejudices of their parents, wives, friends and relatives. Now, let us understand what the Brahmos mean by calling the Educated Natives hypocrites. By the Brahmos, I mean, of course, their representative man through whom these sentiments generally find expression. This accusation must either include all the Educated Natives, or those only who are beyond the pale of Brahmoism. It cannot be supposed, however, that a loving pastor would be so imprudent as to blacken his own faithful flock damagingly in the eyes of the world ; nor is it the fact. For in the many accusations hurled from the Brahmo pulpit there is no indication of any

allusion to this class of Educated Natives—at least, there is nothing in them, which will lead one to suspect that they are also meant to apply to the Brahmos. I will take it, therefore, that it is those who are not Brahmos to whom the charges are intended to refer. Of those charges the most serious is that of hypocrisy; and it is to this that I will confine myself.

The Educated Natives, then, meaning, of course, those who are not Brahmos, are all hypocrites. Hypocrisy signifies acting against one's own convictions. We have to ascertain, therefore, what the convictions of an Educated Native are in matters of religion.

Now, an Educated Native regards religion as a mere social institution; he does not believe in the divine origin of any religious system, and in his eyes none whatever—Christian, Mahomedan, Hindu or Brahmo is free from superstition or absurdity. He cannot become a Brahmo or a Christian, because by so doing he would have to compromise his own convictions just as much as by remaining a Hindu. But he is born a Hindu, his parents, wife, sister and brother

are all Hindus. What under these circumstances is he to do but continue attached to that society in which he has been born, unless he should turn a misanthrope, and leaving society altogether betake himself to some desolate waste or wilderness. Is that what is required of him by those who charge him with being a hypocrite? Or, is it that he is to set at defiance, in each and every act of his life, the usages and customs of the society in which he must live and die? Let us push this argument a little farther. A man is convinced that monarchy is a pernicious evil; is it his duty to become a regicide, and, on all occasions, and in all places, to proclaim his conviction that the king is an abominable monster? One would rather think that it was the duty of every citizen, whatever his private opinion as to the form of Government, to show outward marks of respect for the political institutions of the country in which he lived, and, so long as he lived there, to obey the authority of the laws, however absurd they might appear to him. At least, this has been recognized to be the ordinary rule of conduct for

every citizen, except one who is either a fanatic or a mad man. And as an Educated Native is neither the one nor the other, he is well satisfied to follow the good-sense of mankind. The religious ceremonies of the Hindus he regards as a part of their social economy. He is convinced of the evil, he laments its existence, but he tolerates it by necessity. He tries to remedy the evil, but he does so without violence. The social customs and the usages, and as part of them the religious ceremonies, to which he accords an unwilling acquiescence he would improve, but he would not do so by lacerating the feelings of those whom he loves or venerates, or with whom he has to deal in the various relations of life. He does it without violence, but does it effectually. Within his own domestic circle in most of his actions, and, at times, more openly on many points of conventional propriety, the Educated Native sets at nought the stringent rules of old conservatism ; his mother and father, sister, friend or relatives see and connive at all his doings ; slowly and gradually the authority of deep-rooted customs is

shaken, and through the influence of his conduct new and heterodox opinions daily acquire greater preponderance, and an increasing circulation. Let any one, who knows Hindu society, but honestly say how much that society has been permeated by heterodox ideas, and whether it is not owing mainly to the conduct of the Educated Natives. The truth is that all that is required of a man to be true to his convictions is to shew by his conduct and actions *generally* what he believes and thinks, and that it is only by necessity he tolerates what he cannot avoid. And I say, without the fear of truthful contradiction, that the Educated Native does this fully and honestly. He cannot leave the Hindu society, for then he will have to leave Society altogether, there being no community whose institutions, social and religious, perfectly harmonize with his ideas. But as he is not particularly fond of becoming a misanthrope, nor perceives the virtue or the necessity of becoming a saint by renouncing all who are dearest and nearest to him, he is content to remain in the bosom of that society in which his lot has

been cast, honoring and loving those whom his reason points out as the fittest and highest objects of love and veneration. In his eyes it is less a dereliction of duty to conform occasionally to the absurd social customs and usages of Hindu society (for many of them are undoubtedly absurd and pernicious) than to tear asunder ties which bind him to all that is noblest, holiest, and sweetest upon earth—his parents, his wife, and his children—the angels and cherubs, real, tangible, and substantial.

